

generally would be sent by train and not by motor-lorry, and also that their inward goods would be carried by train. This, combined with a light, fast passenger-service between Blenheim and Christchurch, should place the line on quite a good financial footing. There would also be considerable traffic during the summer and autumn in the form of special passenger excursions, as the east coast of the Marlborough Province possesses a most genial climate, and Kaikoura is a splendid holiday resort.

I return herewith statement forwarded by you.

(Sgd.) R. MCGILLIVRAY, Fields Superintendent.

WESTPORT-INANGAHUA RAILWAY.

Hon. Minister of Public Works.

The total length of this line from Westport to Inangahua Junction is 27 miles 6 chains. From Westport to Te Kuha, a distance of 5 miles 74 chains, the line was completed and handed over to the Railways Department in 1912, but owing to its being only a short isolated length the traffic was almost negligible. In 1911 a vigorous construction policy was initiated, and the work was carried on partly by co-operative contract and partly by special contract, the principle of letting small special contracts to parties of workmen or regular contractors being put into successful operation, some eighteen contracts being let.

Under this system the formation from 5 miles 74 chains to 10 miles was practically completed, but no bridging, platelaying, or ballasting was put in hand. The formation on this length was exceedingly heavy, and included three tunnels; this work was closed down in 1916, and from then for ten years nothing further was done until in 1926 the section to 8 miles 76 chains was put in hand and completed the following year, to give access to the newly opened Cascade Creek Coal-mine. Although the Railways Department handled the traffic from the Cascade Mine, it did not seem advisable, in view of the prospect of proceeding with the Cascade Bridge construction further ahead, to hand this section over to the Railways Department.

In 1928 the construction of the section from Cascade Creek at 8 miles 76 chains to Inangahua Junction was proceeded with vigorously, and approximately 350 men were employed. Extensive provision for housing the workmen, recreation facilities, and social services were provided, and plant and machinery purchased, and good progress had been made with the formation up to about the 25 miles, when work was closed down in 1931.

With the exception of Little Cascade Bridge, however, very little bridge-work was carried out owing to access difficulties; at the time of closing down the cylinders for the piers of the Big Cascade Bridge were completed, and the steelwork was ready for erection. This is now stacked in the Te Kuha Railway yard and has been kept in good order.

The work yet to be done comprises the completion of formation from 10 miles to 27 miles 6 chains, including some very heavy cuttings and fillings which had only been started previously; the clearing of a large number of slips which had developed due to the work being left in an unfinished condition; the construction of eighteen bridges, including those over the Big Cascade, the Buller River, and the Inangahua River; tunnels, as well as many culverts, together with ballasting, platelaying, and the provision of station buildings.

The line runs wholly along the northern bank of the Buller River, which it crosses just above its junction with the Inangahua River, 1 mile 60 chains from the Inangahua Junction Station, where it connects with the railway from Rcefton.

The country it traverses is for the most part rough and precipitous, and, being separated from the main highway by the deep and swift Buller River, the question of transport for workmen and materials is peculiarly difficult. All men have to be camped on the road side of the river and transported backwards and forwards night and morning by means of boats or suspension bridges.

At the time of closing down the work was well equipped with all the necessary plant for transport and construction, with up-to-date workshops and machinery for the maintenance and repair of such plant; but when it was closed down the majority of this plant, stores, &c., was disposed of, and will now have to be replaced.

The estimated cost of completing is £750,000, and the time allowed is three years.

The question of prospective traffic has been referred to the Railways Department, which has made a general survey of the position, but there can be no doubt that a very considerable coal trade with the southern districts will develop and that large quantities of timber will be railed to Westport and shipped from that port.

26th March, 1936.

(Sgd.) J. WOOD.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (699 copies), £7 10s.

By Authority: G. H. LONEY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1936.

Price 6d.]